

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD

THE MILLER

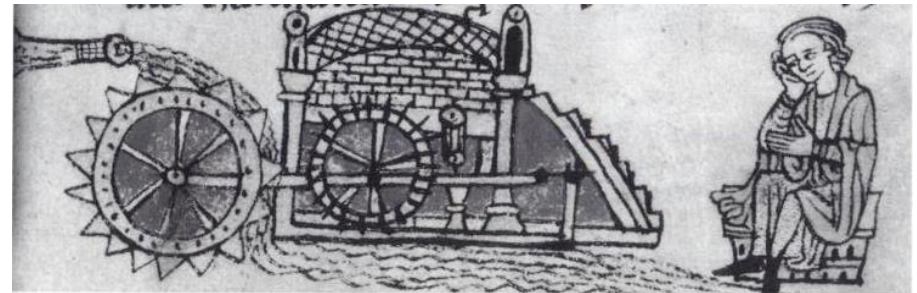
People in medieval Wales ate oats, with wheat, barley and rye bread. Bread was one of the most important foods of the time.

Farmers may have grown the crops, but someone had to turn the grain into flour.

Medieval millers worked in grain mills, which were used to grind wheat, barley, and oats into flour. So millers were very important.

The miller's job was to receive the grain from local farmers, weigh it, and grind it into flour. The miller also had to keep the mill in good working order.

Mills were driven by wind, or water, or sometimes animals. The most common type of medieval mill was the water mill, which used the energy of flowing water to drive a big wheel; this wheel turning gave power to turn the millstones that ground grain into flour.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medieval_mill_with_overshot_wheel.png



Windmill in a medieval illustrated manuscript, Courtesy of the British Library, Royal 10 E. IV, f.89

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD



Ffwrnais Water Mill, Cardiganshire. Photo courtesy of VisitWales.



Interior of a 14thC corn mill Lyme Regis

By Zephyris - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10771557>

A water mill was large wooden or stone building known as the millhouse. In Welsh the word is melin.

It was often near a river or stream, and water was taken from the river into a little stream, called a leet in English, usually fast-flowing down a steep drop, to power the mill's waterwheel.

There is a water mill still standing on Mynydd Dinas, and you can see one working, Melin Bompren, in Sain Ffagan Museum. The one in the picture ran a blast furnace in Ffwrnais, Cardiganshire.

This is how a grain watermill worked: the waterwheel turned a large straight shaft that ran across the millhouse, with gears and cogs that turned the grinding stones. These were in another room.

The grinding stones were made of a hard, rock such as granite or sandstone. The top stone, called the runner, turned over the bottom stone, or bedstone. Grain was poured into a big funnel, and then it dropped down between the two stones. As the runner turned, it ground the grain into flour, which then fell into a bin or sack.

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD

The miller had to get the gap between the stones just right, to make sure the flour was fine enough. To do this he had to move the top stone using a lever.

Millers worked very hard, and had to know how the machinery worked. They also had to be able to move the big stones, and lift the heavy sacks of grain.

The miller worked long hours, often from dawn until dusk, to keep the mill running smoothly, and to take the grain from the farmers, who might call in at any time.

It was possible to cheat the farmers by giving them back less weight in flour than they had as grain, so a miller had to be very honest.

Text adapted from:

<https://medievalbritain.com/type/medieval-life/occupations/medieval-miller/>

<https://welshmills.org/listed-watermills-in-wales/>

<https://aprilmunday.wordpress.com/tag/medieval-miller/>

<https://www.mola.org.uk/discoveries/news/one-mill-ion-find-uncovering-medieval-mill-a428>



Book of Trades (Ständebuch) Jopst Amman 1565

Yale Centre for British Art

https://www.engr.psu.edu/MTAH/articles/german_miller.htm